

VZCZCXRO9738  
PP RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHWD #0249/01 2261624  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 131624Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0018  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WINDHOEK 000249

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/12/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [KMCA](#) [ZI](#) [WA](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES ZIMBABWE, LAND REFORM WITH  
NAMIBIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Classified By: Ambassador Dennise Mathieu for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

Summary

1. (C) During a cordial 45-minute meeting with the Ambassador in his office on August 12, Foreign Minister Marco Hausiku declined to describe the kind of agreement he hoped ZANU-PF and the MDC would reach, saying that was up to Zimbabweans. The Ambassador stressed the U.S. view that Morgan Tsvangirai should have a substantial role, that any new government should be transitional and followed quickly by new elections.

Hausiku replied that Zimbabweans need a cooling-off period before new elections. The Minister delivered an emotional plea on the Government of Namibia's need to proceed quickly with its land reform program, saying Namibians were getting frustrated with the slow pace. The Ambassador noted that announcement of a detailed, transparent land reform program would make it easier for the GRN to manage internal expectations and attract international financial assistance.

Hausiku was delighted with the recent signature of the Millennium Challenge Compact, and regretted that he had been overseas at the time of the signing ceremony. End Summary.

Zimbabwe negotiations

2. (C) The Ambassador asked for Hausiku's assessment of the ongoing negotiations in Harare between ZANU-PF and MDC. The Foreign Minister said he hoped there would be an agreement by the time of the SADC summit August 16-17. He had spoken to the Namibian ambassador in Harare that morning and understood the two sides had reached agreement on most issues. The one sticking point, he said, appeared to be how executive power would be shared. The negotiators are now trying to work out an appropriate division of responsibilities between the President and Prime Minister. The Government of Namibia, he added, is hoping an agreement would be finalized by the time of the SADC Summit August 16-17.

3. (C) Asked whether the Troika would publicly express its views on the agreement, Hausiku responded in the affirmative.

That is why, he explained, President Mbeki would brief the Troika Chair before any public announcement, and the Troika Chair would brief his other SADC counterparts. The Ambassador expressed the USG's hope that any final agreement should express the will of the Zimbabwean people. Since Morgan Tsvangirai had received so many votes, his role in government should be substantial. Our view, she said, was that the new government should be transitional and followed soon after by new, free and fair elections. The Ambassador asked Hausiku what kind of agreement Namibia preferred. Chuckling uncomfortably, Hausiku said "we may have an opinion," but the best outcome is whatever the Zimbabweans themselves agree to. All the political parties should be satisfied with the agreement. "We can't dictate a particular outcome," he declared. He noted that both parties had accepted the legitimacy of the other by agreeing to the MOU on the negotiations. The Foreign Minister was noncommittal about new elections, saying that Zimbabweans

needed a "cooling-off period" to develop a sense of trust in their leadership. At that point, they might be ready for the "next phase." Moving too quickly to new elections could spark similar problems, Hausiku asserted. The Ambassador reiterated the need for the transition period to be as rapid as possible, to which the Minister replied, laughing, "it's better to go slow and arrive alive than to drive fast and arrive dead." The time frame for new elections, he stressed, should be dictated by the situation on the ground.

#### Land reform

-----

¶4. (C) The Ambassador noted that the SADC Tribunal recently had ruled against the government of Zimbabwe in a land seizure case and asked Hausiku's views on next steps. The Minister was dismissive of the ruling, saying it was the first case and adding that "in our system, we accept what the courts say but whether we do what they say is another matter." He said the court should provide an alternative to redress the imbalances that predated the beginning of land reform efforts in Zimbabwe.

¶5. (C) Turning to Namibia, Hausiku said he is under constant pressure from "my people" to speed up land reform efforts. He said he regularly assured Namibians that the government is proceeding with a land reform program, but he said they will stop listening in 15 or 20 years unless the process speeds up. He said frustration is building among the population and made an appeal for resources from the international community. Namibia needs to find a way to redress the imbalances in land ownership while also addressing the needs

WINDHOEK 00000249 002 OF 002

of landowners, he noted.

¶6. (C) The Ambassador said the United States understands Namibia's unique history and she commended the GRN's constitutional approach, its stated preference to proceed with acquisition of land on a willing seller, willing buyer basis. Before the GRN requested resources from the donor community, however, it was important to have a well-defined, transparent program. For instance, it should make clear whether the goal is commercial viability or whether mere distribution of land is sufficient. The GRN also will need to decide whether it will provide agricultural extension services to resettled communities. Once the GRN clarifies those kinds of issues, it will be easier to manage the population's expectations and will facilitate requests for international assistance. The Ambassador noted that the Millennium Challenge Corporation plans to work with communal farmers to help them become more productive.

¶7. (C) Noting that he was Namibia's first Minister of Lands and Resettlement after independence, Hausiku said it wasn't true to say that Namibia doesn't have a land reform program. Policies have been developed, committees have been established to determine who gets settled where, and guidance has been developed on who can apply for land and how. What is missing, though, is support services, such as agricultural extension and provision of inputs to farmers. And, for that, the GRN needs resources. "I accept that the U.S. may see things differently," the Minister said. Germany, he added, doesn't want the GRN interfering in farming, since a large percentage of commercial farmers have roots there. He claimed that Germany had pledged financial assistance for construction of infrastructure on resettled farms ten years ago but still hasn't disbursed any funds. Hausiku said he "can't imagine Germany would ever support our land reform program, regardless of what they say." The only way to proceed is to plan carefully, but the GRN must move forward on this issue using available resources.

Millennium Challenge Compact

-----

¶8. (C) The Foreign Minister said the recent signing of the Millennium Challenge Compact had been great news, and he thanked the Ambassador for shepherding the negotiations to a successful conclusion. The Ambassador noted that the hard work of implementation would now begin.

Mauritania

-----

¶9. (C) The Ambassador thanked Hausiku for Namibia's public statement critical of the coup in Mauritania, noting that recent political developments there had been a setback for Africa. Hausiku agreed, calling the coup a pity and commenting that Mauritania had been headed in the right direction.

SWAPO

-----

¶10. (C) The Ambassador asked about recent media reports criticizing the President for not consulting widely enough prior to making diplomatic appointments, particularly Namibia's Permrep at the UN and ambassador to Botswana. Constitutionally, the President has every right to appoint his diplomatic representatives abroad, Hausiku replied, but "I advise him on all such appointments." He said that no ambassadors have been assigned without his blessing, and ambassadors would remain in place unless the President or he decided otherwise.

Comment

-----

¶11. (C) As usual, Hausiku was charming and engaged, even when discussing the very emotional issue of land reform. Despite his assurances to the contrary, the government does not appear to have a well-defined, transparent land reform program. At a minimum, there has been widespread criticism of the lack of clear criteria for selection of recipients, and of government's failure to provide adequate support to those who are resettled. On Zimbabwe, Hausiku remained noncommittal regarding a political solution. It is unclear exactly what he envisions in terms of a "cooling-off period" prior to new elections, but we will continue to advocate support for a transitional government with the GRN.

MATHIEU